

# NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

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***For Immediate Release***

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## **A RECORD \$3.2 MILLION IN FORFEITED DRUG PROCEEDS DISTRIBUTED FOR USE BY LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Edward E. McNally, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today the distribution of the largest cash forfeiture in the history of the Southern District of Illinois. The distributed cash will be used to administer the federal Asset Forfeiture Program and for law enforcement purposes by the Pontoon Beach Police Department and the Madison County State's Attorney's Office.

The investigation which resulted in the forfeiture began on March 11, 2005, when rookie Pontoon Beach Police Officer John Simmons was dispatched to the Flying J Truck Stop to respond to a complaint from a clerk that a tractor-trailer was blocking the driveway of the business. After becoming suspicious while questioning the truck driver and observing his demeanor, Officer Simmons requested and received consent to search the vehicle. During the search, \$3,294,021 in cash was located. Most of the currency—primarily \$20 bills—was packed in boxes found in the trailer; a portion was concealed in the tractor. It took a team of ten officers almost twelve hours to recover and count the currency.

The Office of Madison County State's Attorney William Mudge took the necessary steps to have the money turned over to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) for administrative forfeiture as drug proceeds. Neither the driver nor any other person claimed an interest in the cash during the forfeiture proceedings, and the funds were declared forfeited pursuant to the provisions of federal law.

Twenty percent of the proceeds are retained by the federal government and applied to the costs of administration associated with the Asset Forfeiture Program. Of the remaining moneys, \$2,371,997.39 will be distributed to the Pontoon Beach Police Department and \$263,555.27 will be distributed to the Madison County State's Attorney's Office. Distribution is expected to be completed by the end of the month.

McNally said: "The good instincts and professionalism of Officer John Simmons shows once again how on any given day one man or woman can make a profound difference, for themselves, their department and their entire community."

According to Department of Justice Guidelines, the distributed funds must be used for law enforcement purposes. The funds can only be used to increase and cannot supplant an agency's appropriated operating budget.